101 where the town of Villa Bella de Mato Grosso, three quarters abandoned,
161 must have undergone several attacks by unknown Indians, during the same period, but whom the rare residents also call by the name of Kabişi. According to our informants, this group in itself still had 700 or 800 individuals of whom we encountered a dozen in September 1938 (1). The other groups decreased rapidly, by epidemics, and

●[163]

1. See below, p. 52.

owing to their feeble birth rate which constitutes a general phenomenon as will be seen in the chapter dedicated to the analysis of each group.

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114 All by himself, Roquette Pinto has attempted a classification of
101 the Nambikwara. He distinguishes four groups. To the southeast,
197 the Kokozu, who live near the Juruena, Juina, Papagaio and Camararé Rivers; to the northeast, the Anunzé, who occupy the basin of the Doze de Otubro River; to the southwest, a group called Uaintaçu or Kabixi, extending from Campos Novos to the valley of the Guaporé. Finally, to the northwest, from the west bank of the Doze de Otubro River to the valley of the Roosevelt River, is found a final group consisting of the Tagnani, Tauité, Saluma, Taruté, Taschuité. Roquette Pinto does not clearly indicate on what basis this classification is founded. One can assume that it is not purely linguistic, since the vocabularies published in Rondonia contain only three dialects. Without doubt, a good deal of empiricism is involved. Besides, the list of groups which is found in the publications of Rondon and his collaborators only occasionally corresponds to the classification of Roquette Pinto. Our own lists of names of groups do not include all those cited by our precursors; but they reveal several new names. At the same time, we have brought up some dialects which had never been mentioned. It is thus too early to proceed to a definitive classification, and farther on will be found the reasons for these uncertainties. The nomad bands of the Nambikwara are of fragile formation, and they all possess a name, a surname derived from the system of parentage or owed to the malice of a neighboring group. Thus the names appear, disappear, or are transmitted with surprising facility. Here is a good example of disagreement [8] between observers working in different periods: Somewhere, between 1926 and 1928, Max Schmidt collected a short vocabulary of 20 words, which he published later on (1) as having been obtained from a group called

1. loc. cit.

833 lively jubilation. Comments are exchanged, jokes made, and even the young children share in the excitement whose motive they are well acquainted with. Sometimes even a small group of men, young women and children, take off in pursuit of the couple and watch the details of the operation through the branches, whispering among themselves and muffling their laughter. The principal actors do not appreciate these goings on at all. However, it is better to take part in them as well as to suffer the taunts and mockeries which greet their return to camp. It also happens that a second couple follows the example of the first and seeks, in their turn, the solitude of the bush. The Indians know and use two positions for coitus. We were not able to find out if they are practiced indiscriminately or if the choice depends on a rule. Whatever the case, besides the posterior position (toãtelosu, a1; inkɔlékenore, b1—to copulate from the rear) so frequent in South America, another position (uataʔãdige, b1) can be described as follows: the woman on her back, the man facing her, the right leg only between the legs of the woman and the left leg outside, so that the two superimposed bodies give the general form of an X.

[66] PARENTS AND CHILDREN

593 163 847 The Nambikwara have few children. Couples without children are not rare, one or two children seem to be a normal number, and it is exceptional to find more than three in a household. Sexual prohibitions and the economic conditions on which they are based which also give rise to abortions, explain this situation. Apparently also Nambikwara formerly had the custom of beating to death the children whose mothers died during childbirth. According to the informants, this practice has been abandoned today.

853 855 The mother gives the breast lying on her side with the child pressed against her. These feedings have no fixed time. The child nurses when he wishes and as much as he wishes. Weaning takes place towards the end of the first year, but up to the age of two or three the infant returns from time to time to the maternal breast.

[514] When a child eliminates at the camp site or inside the hut, the father or mother carefully buries the excrement by digging a small hole which is quickly filled with dry sand. A great deal of care is taken to prevent the children from soiling the camp site and the objects placed near them: